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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 707

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Alice Leona Mikel
Duffield of Oak Ridge, a veteran of World War I.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Alice Leona Mikel Duffield; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duffield was Tennessee's oldest surviving female Veteran of World War I; and

WHEREAS, a native of Sebastian County, Arkansas, she was born on September 27, 1896; she was the daughter of George Elmer Mikel and Amanda Featherston and grew up in Jenny Lind, a coal-mining area near Fort Smith; and

WHEREAS, at a very young age, she displayed a love of service to others that would remain with her throughout her life; at the age of seven, she began reading to her father so that he could memorize law books as he had lost his sight three years earlier; and

WHEREAS, she gained a great concern for human rights by watching her father who had advanced from coal miner to mine owner, lead a labor movement that brought decent wages and medical insurance to miners, and provided food and funding for medical treatment for the miners and their families; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duffield was one of the first nurses trained at Sparks Hospital at Fort Smith and was commissioned as a Captain in the United State Army following her graduation;

during World War I, she provided gallant service stateside at the base hospital at Fort Smith, now Fort Robinson; and

WHEREAS, as women could not be married and remain in the Army Nurse Corps at the time, Mrs. Duffield received her discharge when she was married to William Franklin Hill following the signing of the armistice; he was the first of her three husbands, each of whom she met in hospitals; and

WHEREAS, during the fifteen years following the war, she worked at Veterans hospitals in Dawson Springs, Kentucky; Oteen, North Carolina; Whipple, Arizona; and Johnson City; most of her patients had received mustard gas burns that led them to develop tuberculosis; and

WHEREAS, she met her second husband, Thomas J. Young, at Oteen and they were married in San Antonio in 1926; the couple moved to Fort Smith and lived there until Mr. Young's death the following year; and

WHEREAS, while working in Whipple, she met McKinley Hobart Duffield, who had been hospitalized for six years with tuberculosis; a mere six years later, she was convinced that he would survive the affliction, and they were married in May of 1934 in Prescott, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Duffield shared deep love and companionship for more than fifty years before his death on March 29, 1985; they moved to Oak Ridge and grew to love their adopted home, where he earned the respect of his friends and neighbors as a Produce Manager for several grocery stores and where she served with acumen and alacrity at the Oak Ridge Hospital and at the East Tennessee Tuberculosis Hospital; and

WHEREAS, throughout her life, Mrs. Duffield maintained the fondness of reading that she developed as a young girl, and she was fascinated by history and poetry, which she wrote as well as read; she also wrote editorials and several stories about her early life for her great-grandchildren and her oral memoirs have been preserved by the Library of Congress; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duffield was deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; she was the loving mother of Audrey Henry and Ivor Eugene Hill and the proud and committed grandmother of four grandchildren, Janna,

Claudia, Mark, and John, and nine great-grandchildren, Penelope, Amber, Alexis, Alyxandra, Amanda, Rebecca, Hunter, Corwin, and Morgan; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duffield leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, her service to her country and longevity brought her the admiration of her fellow Tennesseans and Americans; and

WHEREAS, in October, 1998, Anderson County Executive Rex Lynch presented her with a certificate proclaiming her the oldest living Veteran in Anderson County, in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the armistice; and

WHEREAS, on her 102nd birthday, Mrs. Duffield was named a Tennessee Colonel by Governor Don Sundquist; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this supreme patriot and exceptional human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Alice Leona Mikel Duffield, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and the courage and honor with which she served her nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Duffield.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.